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General Assembly
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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 21 April 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to attach hereto a letter, dated 21 April 2014, addressed to you from Riad Malki, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine, on the brutal and repressive actions by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinian Christians during Easter celebrations in Occupied East Jerusalem (see annex).

Please note that the annexed letter is a follow-up to our previous 493 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 16 April 2014 (A/ES-10/624-S/2014/280) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you wold arrange to have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador, Permanent Observer of
the State of Palestine to the United Nations

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Annex to the identical letters dated 21 April 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On this Easter Sunday, I write to convey to you the sad and frustrating circumstances under which Palestinians celebrated this holy occasion owing to the brutal and repressive actions of the Israeli occupation. Adding to the already volatile situation on the ground, Israeli occupation measures against Palestinian Christians and Muslims, especially in Occupied East Jerusalem, have sharply increased tensions and contributed to a deterioration of the situation, in addition to consecrating further a reality of repression of the basic right that all faithful are entitled to: freedom of worship.

As the international community exerts all possible efforts to ensure the resumption of the negotiation process, facilitated by the tireless efforts of United States Secretary of State John Kerry, Israel, the occupying Power, continues its oppression of the Palestinian people by means of all illegal policies, including violating their basic right of freedom of worship and access to holy places.

Instead of having free access to and inside the Old City in Jerusalem, tens of thousands of Palestinians were either denied a permit or barred and obstructed by the Israeli occupation from accessing the city during this holy week, while thousands of others were confronted by barricades, military checkpoints and humiliation. This year's Palm Sunday procession in Jerusalem was overshadowed by the significant absence of the majority of Palestinian Christians, including Palestinians from Gaza, who were denied access to Jerusalem on this important day. This prompted the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Fuad Twal, to declare, "My children were not with me on Palm Sunday."

This unacccptable situation peaked on Saturday, when thousands of the faithful attempted to reach the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to attend the Holy Fire ceremony. Israeli soldiers and police erected dozens of barricades that barred or delayed them from reaching the church. This included the obstruction of foreign diplomats, including the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry.

Such aggressive behaviour by the occupying Power once again marred Easter celebrations and the centuries-old rituals perfumed during this week. Moreover, Israel's actions constituted yet another attempt to undermine and deny the Christian identity and presence in the city, along with the other unlawful measures it continues to pursue that target the Palestinian, Arab and Muslim identity and character of the city. These illegal measures include, but are not limited to, settlement and wall construction, home demolitions, evictions of Palestinian families, revocation of residency rights, excavations, restrictions on access to the city and the continued closure of official Palestinian institutions.

On this occasion, we vociferously condemn all Israeli measures impeding access by the Palestinian people and other Christians and Muslims from around the world to the religious sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and violating their right to worship freely.

While Israel persists in denying the freedom of worship of the Palestinian people, it continues to facilitate the raids of Jewish extremists on sites across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem and Nablus. For example, just today, a group of Israeli extremists headed by Likud Deputy Head of the Knesset, Moshe Feiglin, and accompanied by Israeli occupying forces raided Al Aqsa Mosque compound. The occupying forces attacked Palestinian worshippers using excessive force, including firing stun grenades and rubber-coated steel bullets, causing injury to some, and detaining others.

The blatant disrespect for the mosque and its worshippers and the continued declarations of further raids on the holy site are tantamount to grave acts of incitement, which are stoking religious sensitivities and aggravating already elevated tensions. It is also alarming that Israeli officials continue to recklessly fuel these tensions by encouraging extremists to persist with such provocations, which threaten to ignite religious conflict, with far-reaching and dangerous consequences for the region and beyond.

I would like to conclude by underscoring the importance and urgency of international action to prevent this volatile situation from deteriorating further and to ensure the cessation of Israel's deliberate violation of Palestinians' right to the freedom of worship. The international community must be resolute in demanding an end to Israel's oppression and violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people and an end to all actions aimed at illegally and deliberately altering the demographic composition, character, identity and nature of the Palestinian land it has forcibly occupied since June 1967, including East Jerusalem. The international community must send an unequivocal message to Israel, the occupying Power, that such illegal actions and provocations must cease and will not be tolerated, and that Israel is wholly responsible for the negative impact and consequences of such actions on the ground and on the regional and international efforts to salvage the prospects for a peaceful solution.

(*Signed*) Riad **Malki**
Minister for Foreign Affairs